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BELL'S VIREO NESTING POPULATION AND EVIDENCE OF BROOD PARASITISM AT FORT CAMPBELL MILITARY RESERVATION, TENNESSEE

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Abstract

We surveyed for Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii*) at Fort Campbell Military Reservation, Kentucky-Tennessee, during the breeding seasons of 1999-2014. The number of territorial Bell's Vireos detected each year ranged from 0 to 14 and, with the exception of 2013, increased during the last half of the study. We found 2 Bell's Vireo nests in Tennessee (2007, 2014); one of the nests contained 3 Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) nestlings.

Introduction

Bell's Vireo has been previously reported as an extremely rare bird in Tennessee, with no indication of an established breeding population (Robinson 1990, Nicholson 1997). They were not detected in the state during the 1986-1991 Breeding Bird Atlas period (Nicholson 1997); however their breeding range has been expanding northward and eastward (Kus

et al. 2010). A small population occurs at Fort Campbell Military Reservation (KY-TN), evidenced by nest records (Montgomery County, TN) and a large increase in the number of territorial males documented.

Bell's Vireos breed in shrubby riparian habitats in the central lowlands and southwestern U.S. (American Ornithologists' Union 1998). Their contemporary breeding range extends to the western edge of Tennessee (Kus et al. 2010) and in Kentucky east to Ohio County (Palmer-Ball 1996). Habitats where Bell's Vireos have been found in Tennessee and Kentucky include reclaimed surface mines, shrubby power line right-of-ways, willow-lined sloughs, and in shrub and sapling thickets following timber harvest (Nicholson 1997, Palmer-Ball 1996).

Confirmed records of nesting Bell's Vireos in Tennessee have been sparse. Only 2 nests have been documented, one in Shelby County (Coffee 1935) and one in Lake County (Peeples 2003). The Shelby County nest was the first documented record in Tennessee; it was active from 24-30 June 1935, but ultimately failed (Coffee 1935). The Bell's Vireo nest in Lake County was found at Black Bayou Refuge by M. Todd on 12 May 2003 (Peeples 2003). The nest contained 4 eggs and its fate was undetermined.

Other possible breeding Bell's Vireos include a singing bird 7 July 1946 in Natchez Trace State Park in Henderson County (Coffey 1946) and a male on territory in southwestern Obion County 27 May-1 June 1976 (Pitts 1983).

This note documents the third and fourth known nests of Bell's Vireo in Tennessee (Montgomery County), and the first evidence of Bell's Vireo brood parasitism by Brown-headed Cowbirds in Tennessee. We also document an apparent increase in the breeding population on Fort Campbell.

Methods and Study Area

Fort Campbell is a 42,800 ha Army training installation consisting primarily of hardwood forest, native grassland, loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*) plantations, and leased agricultural fields for hay and row crops. The native grass fields on Fort Campbell, managed by prescribed burning and mowing, provide breeding and non-breeding habitat for a significant population of high-priority grassland and early-successional bird species (Chipley et al. 2003).

Methods

Breeding bird surveys were conducted on Fort Campbell between 1999 and 2014 (with the exception of 2011) using standard 10 min, 50-m fixed-radius point counts (Hamel et al. 1996). Potential nesting habitat was targeted in search of territorial male Bell's Vireos. We broadcasted recordings of male territorial songs to aid in detection if no singing male was heard (Marion et al. 1981). Nests found were monitored every 2-3 days, or until nest completion. Nests checked within the 2-3 day time frame, and close to fledging on the last visit, were considered successful if empty on the following visit. Vegetation measurements surrounding the nest were taken within one week of nest completion.

Results

The number of territorial Bell's Vireo observations steadily increased on Fort Campbell from 1999 to 2014 (Figure 1). The average was 3 territories per year, with a maximum of 14 in 2014 found during the 16-year period (Table 1). Fifteen individuals were observed during point counts, while 41 were documented using playback survey methods. Earliest arrival date from migration was 8 May and latest date observed on breeding territory was 20 September. Eighty percent of Bell's Vireo territories occurred in one large field. Two nests were documented, one in 2007 and one in 2014. We also observed an adult Bell's Vireo on 6 May 2014 with nesting material in its mouth, in the same field as the 2014 nest location, but could not find the nest.

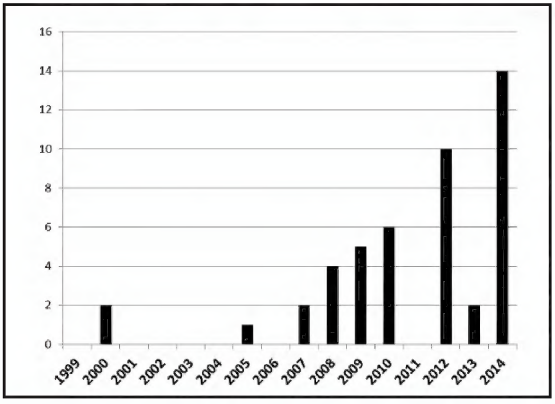

Figure 1. The number of Bell's Vireos observed during the breeding season increased steadily on Fort Campbell Military Reservation (KY-TN) between 1999 and 2014. Surveys were not conducted in 2011.

Nest #1: Research technician A. West found a Bell's Vireo nest (approximate location: 36.55757N, -87.59649W; Montgomery County, TN) with 3 nestlings, estimated 1-2 days old, on 10 June 2007. Based on our nest monitoring methods, nestlings fledged successfully between 19 and 21 June.

Nest #2: We found a Bell's Vireo nest containing 3 young Brown-headed Cowbird nestlings 7 July 2014 (Figure 2). No host vireo nestlings were visible. The cowbird nestlings' eyes were open and the remiges were emerging, indicating chicks were greater than 7 days old (Lowther 1993). The nest was tilting severely to one side at about 50-60 degrees from the horizontal position, apparently in response to the weight of the cowbird nestlings. This nest was empty when checked 9 July, with no apparent damage from predation. Fecal material, in and below the nest, indicated the cowbird nestlings likely fledged. The adult Bell's Vireos were still present in the area.

This nest (location: 36.55619N, -87.60232W; Montgomery County, TN) was discovered in the lowest limb of a 1.7 m tall winged sumac (*Rhus copallinum*). The nest was suspended from the fork of a small branch 7.5 cm from the bole of the sumac. Nest height was 0.95 m above ground. The nest dimensions include outside diameter of 62 mm, outside depth of 55 mm, inside diameter of 44 mm, and inside depth of 30 mm. Directly below the

nest the vegetation was approximately 15% vine, 10% woody, and 75% little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*). The nest was shaded approximately 80%, and there was no bare ground below the nest. Distance to the edge of the drain (wet-weather conveyance) was 19 m, and distance to the edge of a mowed area was 8 m. Nest was constructed of stems and strips of bark held together with spider silk, and lined with fine, grass stems, similar to that described by Harrison (1975).

Figure 2. Photograph of the Bell's Vireo nest on 7 July 2014, at Fort Campbell Military Reservation (Montgomery County, TN), with 3 Brown-headed Cowbird nestlings (photo: Daniel Moss).

This nest was constructed during early June based upon the 4-5 day nest construction time length for Bell's Vireo (Kus et al. 2010), and the Brown-headed Cowbird egg laying, incubation, and nestling stage timeline (Lowther 1993).

A majority of the territories were also found in this large field, primarily occupying black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), black willow (*Salix nigra*), or chickasaw plum (*Prunus augustifolia*) thickets within the field. The smallest field size in which a Bell's Vireo was observed on Fort Campbell was 65 ha.

Discussion

The documented number of territorial Bell's Vireos between 1999 and 2014, along with the 2 nests observed, has confirmed a nesting population in Tennessee. This rise in the Bell's Vireo population is most likely in response to an increase in shrubby vegetation on Fort Campbell. While we did document 2 territorial males in Kentucky (16 May 2014,

Christian County; 30 Aug 2013, Trigg County), the vast majority of Bell's Vireos were found on the Tennessee section of Fort Campbell. Numbers of Bell's Vireo territories were lower in 2013 most likely due to limited survey effort.

Both Bell's Vireo nests, and a majority of documented territories, occurred in the brushy drains of a very large mixed-grass field on Fort Campbell. This field is one of the largest known contiguous grasslands in Tennessee (565 ha), used as a drop zone for parachute training and helicopter landing. Some of the drop zone is actively managed by local farmers for hay lease operations, whereas the rest of the field is fallow, and is burned or mowed on a rotational management basis. Bell's Vireo territories were found in scattered thickets of black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), black willow (*Salix nigra*), chickasaw plum (*Prunus augustifolia*), and sumac (*Rhus spp.*) throughout the field and along the drains.

Eighty percent of the Fort Campbell Bell's Vireo population occurred in the largest field on base; Bell's Vireos were not detected in fields less than 65 ha. We applied equal effort searching both large and small fields, and both appeared to contain vegetation structure consistent with vireo habitat. Our observations suggest this species may be area sensitive, although we found no mention of this aspect of their habitat selection in the literature.

Nest measurements and dimensions of the 2014 Bell's Vireo nest were similar to other eastern Bell's Vireo nests. Nest height of 0.95 m was slightly above the range Harrison (1975) found for other eastern nests (0.6-0.9 m). Bell's Vireo nests in Kentucky (n=7; Palmer-Ball 1996) and Indiana (n=13; Mumford 1952) both averaged 0.8 m above ground, whereas Parody and Parker (2002) reported that most Bell's Vireo nests were located approximately 1 m above ground.

Trees used for Bell's Vireo nesting vary locally and geographically (Kus et al. 2010). Winged sumacs were not mentioned specifically in the literature as being used for Bell's Vireo nest substrate, although nests were located in sumacs (*Rhus spp.*) in Kentucky (Palmer-Ball 1996).

Throughout its range, Bell's Vireo has been reported to be heavily parasitized by the Brown-headed Cowbird. This loss of productivity may be a leading cause of population declines in Bell's Vireos (Kus et al. 2010). Bell's Vireo declined significantly (-2.7% per year, $P = 0.02$) in North America from 1966 to 2007 based on Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) data (Sauer et al. 2008).

We cannot draw any conclusions about how cowbird parasitism is affecting the Bell's Vireo population at Fort Campbell because of a sample size of only 2 nests. Regardless, the Bell's Vireo population on Fort Campbell has increased in spite of the cowbird parasitism rate.

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We would like to thank Department of Defense, Fort Campbell Military Reservation and Gene Zirkle, Fish & Wildlife Program Manager. We thank Bob Ford, Brainard Palmer-Ball, and David Pitts for their editorial comments and assistance. We would also like to thank all the field technicians who assisted on this research.

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Table 1. Location, date, and number of Bell's Vireos detected, 1999-2014, Fort Campbell Military Reservation (KY-TN).

Date	Number	Latitude	Longitude	State	Point Count	Nest
20 May 2000	2	36.63010	87.58582	TN	Y	N
25 May 2005	1	36.56114	87.52751	TN	Y	N
10 Jun 2007	2	36.55757	87.59649	TN	N	Y
2 Jun 2008	1	36.55390	87.60333	TN	Y	N
2 Jun 2008	1	36.55662	87.59867	TN	Y	N
26 Jun 2008	2	36.55725	87.59727	TN	N	N
29 May 2009	1	36.55646	87.59928	TN	Y	N
29 May 2009	1	36.55133	87.60983	TN	N	N
23 Jul 2009	1	36.54774	87.58407	TN	N	N
24 Jul 2009	2	36.54866	87.60740	TN	N	N
8 May 2010	1	36.55268	87.60981	TN	N	N
8 May 2010	1	36.54904	87.58483	TN	N	N
21 Jun 2010	1	36.54539	87.60049	TN	N	N
22 Jun 2010	1	36.55183	87.61063	TN	N	N
25 Jun 2010	1	36.55561	87.60177	TN	N	N
6 Jul 2010	1	36.55183	87.61063	TN	N	N
14 Jul 2010	1	36.54904	87.58483	TN	N	N
4 Jun 2012	1	36.61561	87.74596	TN	N	N
6 Jun 2012	1	36.55684	87.59873	TN	N	N
12 Jun 2012	1	36.55110	87.59340	TN	Y	N
13 Jun 2012	2	36.60490	87.74316	TN	Y	N
3 Jul 2012	2	36.55684	87.59873	TN	N	N
23 Jul 2012	1	36.61438	87.74161*	TN	N	N
7 Aug 2012	1	36.54949	87.58841	TN	N	N
7 Aug 2012	1	36.55090	87.58951	TN	N	N
10 Aug 2012	1	36.55785	87.59708	TN	N	N
10 Aug 2012	1	36.55757	87.59637	TN	N	N
15 Sep 2012	1	36.54881	87.58512	TN	N	N
16 May 2013	1	36.55661	87.59903	TN	N	N

Table 1.(con't))

Date	Number	Latitude	Longitude	State	Point Count	Nest
30 Aug 2013	1	36.68302	87.70463*	KY	N	N
6 May 2014	1	36.54933	87.58806	TN	N	N
6 May 2014	2	36.54993	87.59711	TN	N	N
6 May 2014	1	36.54968	87.59719	TN	N	N
6 May 2014	2	36.55706	87.59844	TN	N	N
12 May 2014	2	36.55042	87.59212	TN	N	N
12 May 2014	1	36.55037	87.58999	TN	N	N
12 May 2014	1	36.55091	87.58957	TN	N	N
16 May 2014	1	36.64230	87.66708	KY	N	N
20 Jun 2014	1	36.61709	87.70414	TN	N	N
20 Jun 2014	1	36.61927	87.71724*	TN	N	N
7 Jul 2014	2	36.55619	87.60232	TN	N	Y
25 Jul 2014	1	36.55625	87.59078	TN	N	N
6 Aug 2014	2	36.54993	87.59711	TN	N	N
20 Sep 2014	2	36.54993	87.59711	TN	N	N

*Approximate

ROUND TABLE NOTES

OBSERVATIONS OF A MISSISSIPPI KITE NEST, SOUTH TIPTON COUNTY - On 26 April 2014, I observed a Mississippi Kite *(Ictinia mississippienes)* carrying a twig. It landed near the top of an American Sweetgum *(Liquidambar styraciflua)*. The foundation of a nest was soon located in a crotch of the main trunk, approximately 24 m high and 5 m from the crown. Nest construction continued for another 11 days. On 11 May the female was observed sitting tight on the nest, indicating onset of incubation. I was able to observe the nest at least once a day over the next month. On several occasions an adult (usually the male) was seen bringing leafy material to the nest, which was added to the lining by the sitting bird. On 12 June an adult kite was first seen bringing food to the nest. A nestling was not visible, but clearly being fed. Two young were seen on 17 June. Over the next month, I was able to witness 57 prey items brought to the nest; 44 were insects, mostly grasshoppers, dragonflies and at least three cicadas. One small snake, one frog, two small rodents and four small birds were also delivered. Five items could not be identified. Both adults fed the young, although on at least a dozen occasions early in the nestling stage, the male brought an item, passed it to the female, who then fed the young. Only once, on 13 June, did I observe feeding by regurgitation.

On 9 July a young bird was seen sitting on the side of the nest. On 11 July both young were perched on or near the nest. The young were fed both in and out of the nest over the next several days. On 16 July the first short flight was observed. By 19 July both young had fledged. On 30 July I observed a juvenile being fed in mid-air by the adult male. All the birds departed the area, not being seen after 4 August.

Dick Preston, Munford, Tennessee

TENNESSEE LONGEVITY RECORD FOR CAROLINA CHICKADEE – On 13 May 2014, while banding birds at my home in Bristol, Tennessee, I caught a Carolina Chickadee (*Poecile carolinensis*) in a mist net. The chickadee was a recapture of a bird that I had banded on 28 January 2006. I had previously recaptured this bird in November 2007, May 2008 and in November 2008. There was an absence of five years before recapturing it again in November 2013. During the recapture in May of 2008, I was able to establish that it was a male, based on its having a cloacal protuberance. At the time of banding, I determined by plumage that it was a second year bird, meaning it was hatched in 2005. The bird looked to be in good health during recapture. Interestingly, the band was still in good condition. This bird would have a minimum age at last recapture of 8 years and 11 months, based on the aging formula used by the U. S. Geological Survey Bird Banding Laboratory.

An interesting note to this record is that this chickadee shares a breeding territory with a pair of Cooper's Hawks (*Accipiter cooperii*). The Cooper's Hawks have nested adjacent to my yard for the past five years. Having such a bird predator around certainly decreases the survival odds for such a small bird as a chickadee.

The longevity record for Carolina Chickadee is 10 years and 11 months (http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbl/longevity/longevity_main.cfm) and occurred in West Virginia. The longevity record for this species in Tennessee is 8 years and 7 months (Danny Bystrak, Bird

Banding Laboratory, personal communication). The Carolina Chickadee that I recaptured represents the new longevity record for the species in Tennessee.

Richard Lewis, Bristol, Tennessee

NOTES ON NESTING PROTHONOTARY WARBLER AND LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH IN WEST TENNESSEE - The Prothonotary Warbler (*Protonotaria citrea)* is a common nesting bird of the cypress swamps of West Tennessee. It is the only eastern wood warbler that nests in tree cavities. On 16 May 2014, I flushed a Prothonotary Warbler from a nest located between heavily vegetated prongs of cypress knees on a bald cypress *(Taxodium distichum)* at Mineral Slough, Ghost River State Natural Area, Fayette County, Tennessee. Although the nest was not placed in a cavity, the density of the vegetation surrounding the nest essentially formed a cavity (Figure 1). The nest contained at least two eggs and one nestling. The water depth around the cypress knee was approximately 1 m. Although tree cavities are the most commonly found nesting sites by researchers, Prothonotary Warblers are also known to use cypress knees (Petit, 1999). Prothonotary Warblers were observed entering dead-tree cavities near the nest site, but it is not known if they nested in these cavities.

Louisiana Waterthrushes *(Parkesia motacilla)* nest primarily in small hollows under overhanging roots or other vegetation along perennial streams flowing through closed-canopy deciduous or mixed-evergreen forest (Mattsson et al. 2009). These habitat types are uncommon in West Tennessee. On 30 May 2014, I flushed a Louisiana Waterthrush from the root base of an upturned tree found along the edge of a cypress swamp at Walker Branch State Natural Area, Hardin County, Tennessee. The nesting location is within the eastern end of the Coastal Plain Uplands physiographic region. The nest contained three nestlings. Most confirmed or probable nest sites in Tennessee are from the Western Highland Rim east to the Unaka Mountains (Nicholson 1997). Louisiana Waterthrush is known to nest in cypress swamps and bottomland forests in low densities (Graber et al. 1983) and have been found to occasionally use the root base of an upturned tree as nesting sites (Mattsson et al. 2009; C. P. Nicholson, personal communication).

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Allan J. Trently, Jackson, Tennessee

Figure 1. Prothonotary Warbler nest placed between the prongs of cypress tree knees at Mineral Springs, Ghost River State Natural Area, Fayette County, Tennessee.

REPORT OF THE TENNESSEE BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

Kevin Calhoon
934 Cravens Terrace
Chattanooga, TN

This report describes the actions taken by the Tennessee Bird Records Committee of the Tennessee Ornithological Society from the winter of 2013 to the spring of 2014. Committee members and alternates who served during this period were Kevin Calhoon (secretary), Mike Todd, Bill Pulliam, Don Miller, Jan Shaw, Mark Greene and Phillip Casteel was the alternate.

Acceptance criteria remained the same throughout the year. A species is placed on the confirmed list based upon either (a) extant, verified specimen, photograph, or sound recording, each accompanied by written details, or (b) satisfactory written documentation of three independent sight records, or satisfactory written documentation or three independent observers of the same bird. Without these levels of documentation, a species is placed on the Provisional List based on one or two sight records with satisfactory written documentation. Acceptance to either list requires no more than one dissenting vote of the committee, as directed by the amended resolution at the 1998 Spring Meeting. This report contains seven records with six accepted and one that was not.

RESULTS OF THE TENNESSEE BIRD RECORD COMMITTEE VOTING FOR THE 2013 AND 2014

RECORDS ACCEPTED

Cave Swallow (*Petrochelidon fulva*)

Sullivan County, 7 November 2012. Submitted by Rick Knight. Good written documentation. Accepted 6 – 0.

This bird is a ***first accepted state record*** placed on the Provisional category on the "Official List of the Birds of Tennessee" because it was accepted by the committee but was just written documentation from a single observer. The state list is now at 409 with the addition of the Cave Swallow.

Harris Sparrow (*Zonotrichia querula*)

Maury County, 29 December 2012. Submitted by Bill Pulliam. Good photos and documention. Accepted (6-0). Good photos and documentation.

White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*)

Submitted by Clyde Blum, Bledsoe County, 4/29/12. Accepted (6-0). Good photos and documentation.

Spotted Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*) Submitted by Rodger Dicks, Shelby County 3/17/13. Accepted (6-0). Good photos

Ash-throated Flycatcher (*Myiarchus crinitus*)

Submitted by Susan McWhirter, Shelby County, 12/29/12. Accepted (6-0). Good documentation and photos.

Eurasion Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)

Submitted by Rueben Stoll, Decatur County, 1/12/13. Accepted (6-0). Good documentation and photos.

RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED

Gyrfalcon (*Falco rusticolus*)

Submitted by Gwynn Evans in Knox County, 1/2/13. Unaccepted (0-6). Committee felt documentation did not eliminate other species.

We wish to thank Rick Knight, Rodger Dicks, Susan McWhirter, Rueben Stoll, Clyde Blum, and Bill Pulliam who submitted documentation or photographs to the committee.

IN MEMORIAM: ROBERT "BOB" M. HATCHER (1938-2014)

Robert M. "Bob" Hatcher was born in Davidson County on March 22, 1938. He joined the Tennessee Ornithological Society in 1979 and was a committed leader and mentor for the organization. Over the years, Bob held several leadership positions with both the Nashville chapter and the state society, including state Secretary from 1991 – 1995. For his outstanding service to Tennessee bird conservation and the TOS, he received the TOS Distinguished Service Award in 1999.

Bob earned an undergraduate biology from Middle Tennessee State University and a graduate Fisheries Biology degree from Auburn University. In 1978, he was hired by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, where he worked for 38 years before retiring. Over the years at TWRA, Bob worked on or initiated many programs that were beneficial to the birdlife in Tennessee. Among the many successful initiatives he worked on included Habitat in Your Own Backyard, the Homecoming Tennessee Campaign, the establishment of the Eastern Bluebird as the "Coming Home" representative, the Bald Eagle hacking program, and establishing Monsanto as a Wildlife Viewing area. Bob may be best known nationally for his success in reintroducing Bald Eagles; he oversaw the hacking of 274 Bald Eagles between 1980 and 1988, and watched as wild eagle nests increased dramatically from one in 1983 to 38 in 1988. In his retirement, he continued to volunteer his energy to work with eagles, representing the American Eagle Foundation in many notable efforts.

Perhaps most importantly, Bob was a mentor to those around him. He lived and breathed his beliefs; he humbly offered and persuaded others to join in the conservation effort. As easy as a spring breeze, Bob usually found a way to get the most important work done. He had a passion for conserving all forms of wildlife and wildlife habitats. He always seemed to be a "mover and a shaker", without really seeming so because he was always so pleasant and firm in his beliefs. Bob seemed to have the ability to get things done without having to resort to heavy-handedness, anger, berating people, or arm-twisting. Bob worked with what he had and kept moving forward, persistently and doggedly, until the result was achieved.

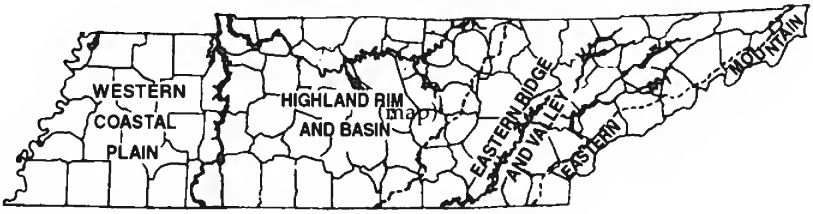
The TOS lost a great friend with Bob's passing, but his legacy will endure. It was our honor to have him as a member and friend.

Melissa Turrentine and Ron Hoff

Bob Hatcher's legacy to bird conservation included leading the field effort to reintroduce Bald Eagles back into Tennessee.

THE SUMMER SEASON

Richard L. Knight, Editor



1 June - 31 July 2014

Temperatures were noticeably below average this season, particularly throughout July, with many comments on the coolness of the summer. Rainfall varied from above average in West Tennessee to slightly below average in East Tennessee.

As often happens, the number of reports during the summer nesting season was much fewer than during the spring and fall migrational seasons or the winter season. Vacations and other summertime activities account for part of this reduction in birding, as do the typically hot conditions of summer. Possible, too, is the perception of some birders that summer offers few exciting birds to see. A look at this summer's sightings in the reports below may dispel that notion.

An apparent new nesting colony of Anhingas was discovered in Gibson County. Nesting by Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks and Western Kingbirds continued in Shelby County. Bell's Vireos and Bachman's Sparrows were on territory and likely nested at Fort Campbell. Scissor-tailed Flycatchers nested at several tradional sites in Middle and East Tennessee. Scarce nesters in the mountains included Northern Saw-whet Owl, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker and Peregrine Falcon, while summer records of likely breeding Magnolia and Yellow-rumped Warblers continued.

Unexpected for summer were sightings of White-winged Scoter, Horned Grebe, American Bittern, Sandhill Crane, Golden Eagle, Merlin, and Yellow-headed Blackbird. Early southbound shorebirds included Piping Plover and American Avocet.

Standard Abbreviations

ad - adult
Co - County
Cr - Creek
ers - earliest reported sighting
et al. - and others
fide - reported by
im - immature
L - Lake
lrs - latest reported sighting
max - maximum count
m.ob. - many observers
Mtn - Mountain
NWR - National Wildlife Refuge
R - River
SP - State Park
WMA - Wildlife Management Area
yg - young

WESTERN COASTAL PLAIN REGION - - The most interesting thing about the summer season of 2014 was the weather. The region as a whole experienced one of the wettest Junes on record. Rainfall in the Memphis area exceeded 13 inches, making it the city's second wettest June ever. July proved to be one of the coolest on record, averaging a full 7 degrees below normal.

On the birding front, the most unusual sighting was a female Canvasback at Ensley Bottoms. There are no known prior records for the species in West Tennessee during summer. An American Bittern, also at Ensley, was either very early or a possible breeder. Thanks to all who contributed their records.

Duck - Pelican: **Black-bellied Whistling-Duck:** 13 Jun (2) Old Hwy 104, western Gibson Co (MAG), first Co record; 20 Jul (27 ad, 28 yg) Ensley (VBR), max. **Greater White-fronted Goose**: 1 Jun (1, injured) Hatchie NWR (RPF); thru season (2, one injured) Ensley (Jay Walko). **Blue-winged Teal**: 1 Jun (1) Hatchie NWR (RPF). **Canvasback**: 19 Jul (1, appeared uninjured) Ensley (Q.B. Gray, VBR). **Hooded Merganser**: 1 Jun (hen with 3 yg) Hatchie NWR (RPF). **Anhinga**: 17 Jun - 17 Jul (max 4 males, 6 females, and 6 im on later date) Macedonia Bottoms (MAG), apparently nested in large colony of Great Blue Herons and Great Egrets; 4 Jul (1) Reelfoot L, Obion Co (Lyda Phillips). **Double-crested Cormorant**: 17 Jun - 17 Jul (max 10 ad, 5 im on latter date) Macedonia Bottoms (MAG), apparently nested, but none actually seen in nests. **American White Pelican**: 8 Jun (3) Reelfoot L, Obion Co (Daniel Estabrooks).

Bittern - Tern: **American Bittern**: 25 Jul (1) Riverport Rd, Shelby Co (DDP, RH). **Great Egret**: 28 Jul (89) O'Neal L, Hatchie NWR (RPF), max there. **Snowy Egret**: 28 Jul (3) O'Neal L, Hatchie NWR (RPF). **Little Blue Heron**: 17 Jun / 17 Jul (2 / 1) Macedonia Bottoms (MAG), no evidence of nesting. **Mississippi Kite**: 30 May - 1 Jun (active nest) Hatchie NWR (RPF); mid Jun (40+) Macedonia Bottoms (MAG); 19 Jul (7) Paris, Henry Co (Shawna Ellis); 25 Jul (50+) Agricenter, Memphis (Knox Martin), max. **Sharp-shinned Hawk**: 2 Jul (1) Dyer Co (MAG). **Semipalmated Plover**: 25 Jul (2) Ensley (DDP, RH), ers. **Spotted Sandpiper**: 9 Jun (1) Island 13 (SGS), lrs. **Greater Yellowlegs**: 9 Jun (1) Island 13 (SGS), lrs. **Sanderling**: 26 Jul (1) Island 13 (RS, m.ob.), ers. **Least Sandpiper**: 20 Jul (73) Ensley (VBR). **Stilt Sandpiper**: 20 Jul (1) Ensley (VBR), ers. **Least Tern**: 9 Jun (175 ad, 33 nests with eggs) Tiptonville Bar, Lake Co (SGS); 10 Jul (150, several nests with eggs) island in Mississippi R, Lauderdale Co (SGS). **Black Tern**: 9 Jun (2) Tiptonville Bar, Lake Co (SGS).

Flycatcher – Sparrow: **Willow Flycatcher**: 23 Jun (1) Gibson Co (MAG). **Western Kingbird**: 6 Jul (2 ad, 4 yg) Ensley (Sam Lawson); 25 Jul (2) TVA Lake, Shelby Co (Jay Walko); 27 Jul (2) Presidents Island, Shelby Co (TJW). **Fish Crow**: 13 / 17 Jun (3-4) Macedonia Bottoms (MAG). **Lark Sparrow**: 18 Jun - 17 Jul (singles at 4 sites) Gibson Co (MAG); 28 Jul (2) Wolf R Greenway, Shelby Co (RH); 29 Jul (1) Ensley (DDP, Van Harris).

Locations: Ensley - Shelby Co; Hatchie NWR - Haywood Co; Island 13 - Lake Co; Macedonia Bottoms - North Forked Deer River, Gibson Co.

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HIGHLAND RIM and BASIN REGION - - The weather was unusually cool for June and July. In spite of the relatively decent weather, there were few bird reports for the summer. A few nice shorebirds and wading birds were found at Duck River Unit, including Piping Plover, Upland Sandpiper, early Stilt and Baird's Sandpipers, plus a Wood Stork that remained elusive to most birders. Fort Campbell had one cooperative Bachman's Sparrow that was observed by many on a couple field trips. Also, Bell's Vireos have become more regular on the base as the Suchon Drop Field has not been burned as frequently and is getting woody.

Duck - Heron: **Blue-winged Teal**: 2 Jun (1) marsh on Walter S. Davis Blvd, Nashville (Frank Fekel). **Lesser Scaup**: 8 Jun (1) Radnor L, Davidson Co (Jan Shaw). **Hooded Merganser**: 11 Jul (1) Duck R Unit (CW). **Common Loon**: 9 Jul (1) Percy Priest Dam, Rutherford Co (Spencer Coffey). **Wood Stork**: 16 Jul thru period (1) Duck R Unit (CF). **Double-crested Cormorant**: 3 Jun (1 nest) Little Elder Island (SGS); 9 Jun (1400+) Whiteoak Cr embayment, Kentucky L, Houston Co (SGS); 9 Jun (500+ ad, 700+ yg in nests) island just south of Whiteoak Cr, Kentucky L, Humphreys Co (SGS); 8 Jul (600) Duck R Unit. **American White Pelican**: 3 Jun / 11 Jul (43 / 41) Duck R Unit (CF / CW). **Great Egret**: 3 Jun (6 nests) Little Elder Island (SGS); 8 Jul (300) Duck R Unit (SGS), max. **Snowy Egret**: 3 Jun (4, plus 1 nest with yg) Little Elder Island (SGS). **Little Blue Heron**: 11 Jul (1 ad) Duck R Unit (CW). **Cattle Egret**: 3 Jun (500+, with 75+ nests on the ground) Little Elder Island (SGS); 4 Jun (12) Pear Island, Percy Priest L, Davidson Co (SGS); 8-11 Jul (6-8) Duck R Unit (SGS / CW). **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron**: 17 Jul (1 im) Rock Island SP, Warren Co (Susan McWhirter).

Kite - Owl: **Mississippi Kite**: 9 Jul (1) Clarksville (Stefan Woltmann); 27 Jul (1) Duck R Unit (TJW). **Sandhill Crane**: 3 Jun (1) Duck R Unit (CF), possibly same bird returning for 3rd summer. **Piping Plover**: 27 Jul (1) Duck R Unit (RS). **Upland Sandpiper**: 27 Jul (1) Duck R Unit (RS). **Baird's Sandpiper**: 8 Jul (1) Duck R Unit (SGS), new early fall date in state. **Stilt Sandpiper**: 8 Jul (4) Duck R Unit (SGS), ers. **Short-billed Dowitcher**: 8 Jul (2) Duck R Unit (SGS), ers. **Caspian Tern**: 8 Jul (3) Duck R Unit (SGS), ers. **Black Tern**: 4 Jun (8 / 1) Percy Priest L, Rutherford / Davidson Co portions (SGS). **Barn Owl**: 9 Jun (ad with 2 yg in nest) Perry Co (RS); 9-28 Jun (5, including 4 fledged yg) Centertown, Warren Co (Brian Mathis, fide SGS).

Flycatcher - Dickcissel: **Willow Flycatcher**: 13 Jun (4) Fort Campbell (SGS, DMo). **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher**: 7 Jun (2 pair) Florence Rd, Rutherford Co (TJW, CW, et al.); 28 Jun (3 im) Rutherford Co (Kristy Baker); 26-28 Jun (6-8) Bedford Co (Melissa Turrentine). **Bell's Vireo**: thru Jun and Jul (1-3, on territory) Fort Campbell (DMo). **Blue-headed Vireo**: 20 Jul (1) Lobelville, Perry Co (RS). **Fish Crow**: 3 Jun (2) Little Elder Island (SGS). **Blue-**

winged Warbler: 11 Jul (ad feeding cowbird fledgling) Narrows of the Harpeth, Cheatham Co (Richard Connors). **Cerulean Warbler**: 13 Jun (4) Lobelville, Perry Co (RS). **Yellow Warbler**: 1 Jun (1) Radnor L, Davidson Co (Frank Fekel). **Bachman's Sparrow**: thru Jun and Jul (1 on territory) Fort Campbell (DMo). **Lark Sparrow**: 7 Jun (2 pair, plus 1 im) Wilson Co (TJW, et al.); 13 Jun (2) Fort Campbell (SGS, DMo). **Grasshopper Sparrow**: 6 Jul (9) Warren Co (Susan McWhirter, N.P. McWhirter). **Henslow's Sparrow**: thru Jun and Jul (4+) Fort Campbell (DMo). **Dickcissel**: 28 Jun (pair) Bedford Co (Melissa Turrentine).

Locations: Duck R Unit - unit of Tennessee NWR, Humphreys Co; Fort Campbell, Montgomery Co; Little Elder Island - Woods Reservoir, Franklin Co.

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CUMBERLAND PLATEAU / RIDGE and VALLEY REGION - - June temperatures were near normal, while July was considerably cooler than normal. Rainfall continued slightly below average in most places, but varied considerably around the region due to the scattered nature of typical summer thunder showers.

A lingering adult male White-winged Scoter provided the first summer record in the state. Two Snowy Egrets and a White Ibis hinted at a good movement of wandering waders for early autumn. The first wave of southbound shorebirds was highlighted by a small flock of American Avocets. An adult male Yellow-headed Blackbird was most unexpected in this season.

Duck - Hawk: **Blue-winged Teal**: 27 May / 28 Jul (1) lower Beaver Cr, near Bristol, Sullivan Co (RRK / RMC), possibly summered. **Greater Scaup**: 17 Jul (1 female) Nickajack L, Marion Co (TLR), lingering since winter. **White-winged Scoter**: 17 Jul (1 male) Nickajack L, Marion Co (TLR), holdover from winter, first summer record in state. **Hooded Merganser**: 1 Jun (2) Steele Cr Park, Sullivan Co (Larry McDaniel); 9 Jun (1) Knox Co (KDE); 28 Jun / 16 Jul (2 / 1) Bible Refuge (DW). **Red-breasted Merganser**: 6 Jun (1) Brainerd Levee (HB). **Common Loon**: 15 Jun (1, basic plumage) L. Tansi, Cumberland Co (Ed LeGrand). **Pied-billed Grebe**: 16 Jul (1) Bible Refuge (DW), ers. **Great Egret**: 28 Jun / 8 Jul (13) Bible Refuge (DW); 26 Jul (160+) Rankin Bottoms, Cocke Co (Michael Sledjeski). **Snowy Egret**: 21-26 Jul (1) Eagle Bend, Anderson Co (Morton Massey, m.ob.); 23 Jul (1) Amnicola Marsh, Hamilton Co (KAC). **Little Blue Heron**: 2 Jul (1 im) Brainerd Levee (HB, et al.); 26 Jul (1 ad) Rankin Bottoms, Cocke Co (Michael Sledjeski). **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron**: 25 Jun / 2 Jul (1) Brainerd Levee (HB); 28 Jul (1 ad, 1 im) lower Beaver Cr, near Bristol, Sullivan Co (RMC). **White Ibis**: 19-20 Jul (1 im) Bible Refuge (DW). **Bald Eagle**: thru Jun (3 yg in nest, all fledged) John Sevier L, Hawkins Co (Susan Hubley), somewhat unusual to have 3 yg. **Red-shouldered Hawk**: 28 Jun (1) Bible Refuge (DW).

Coot - Owl: **American Coot**: 22 Jun (1) Tennessee R, Marion Co (TLR). **American Avocet**: 24 Jul (4) Austin Springs, Washington Co (RLK). **Semipalmated Plover**: 24 Jul (1) John Sevier L, Hawkins Co (Susan Hubley), ers. **Spotted Sandpiper**: 14 Jul (2) Bible Refuge (DW), ers. **Solitary Sandpiper**: 15 Jul (2) Paddle Cr pond (RMC), ers. **Greater Yellowlegs**: 14 Jul (1) Bible Refuge (DW), ers. **Least Sandpiper**: 14 Jul (4) Bible Refuge (DW), ers. **Pectoral Sandpiper**: 19 Jul (1) Bible Refuge (DW), ers. **Stilt Sandpiper**: 14 Jul (1) Bible Refuge (DW). **Barn Owl**: mid Jun (1) Morgan Co (Brian Lester, fide, KDE19-27 Jun (1-3) Paddle Cr pond (JWC, m.ob.).);

Passerines: **Willow Flycatcher**: 9 Jun (1) Knox Co (KDE). **Scissor-tailed Flycatcher**: thru season (pair at nest) South Pittsburgh, Marion Co (KAC); 5 Jul (9) Bledsoe Co (Chattanooga chapter of TOS), max there; 17 Jul (1 ad female, 1 im) near Nickajack Dam, Marion Co (Jonnie Sue Lyons). **Loggerhead Shrike**: 18 Jun / 12 Jul (1) Greene Co (Don Miller); 8 Jul (1) Eastbridge, Knox Co (Jason Sturner), few recent records in Co. **Fish Crow**: 3 Jun (2) Bennett L, Marion Co (SGS). **Common Raven**: 7 Jun (4) Church Hill, Hawkins Co (Rick Phillips). **Bank Swallow**: 28 Jun (1) Bible Refuge (DW), ers. **Brown-headed Nuthatch**: 12 Jul (1) Catoosa WMA, Cumberland Co (Mike McCloy), apparently first Co record since initial one in 1990 (*The Migrant* 61:62). **Cedar Waxwing**: 10 Jul (pair, nest building) Blount Co (Warren Bielenberg). **Prothonotary Warbler**: 13 Jun (5) Phipps Bend, Hawkins Co (David Cassel); 14 Jun (1) Candies Cr, Bradley Co (David Chaffin); 4 Jul (1) Taylor Ford Rd, Pickett Co (David Chaffin); 15 Jul (1) Austin Springs, Washington Co (RLK). **Swainson's Warbler**: 7 Jun (1) Rock Cr, Big South Fork, Scott Co (Kevin Bowden). **Cerulean Warbler**: 19 Jun (pair, 2 fledged yg) Tennessee R Gorge, Marion Co (Rick Huffine), first known breeding since late 1990s (fide, KAC). **Savannah Sparrow**: 28 May - 15 Jul (1-3) Conklin, Washington Co (RLK); 27 / 31 Jul (2 / 3) Bible Refuge (DW). **Dickcissel**: 12 Jun (2 males, 1 female) near Wal-Mart Distribution Center, Greene Co (Ben Britton); 15 Jun (2) Tri-cities Airport, Sullivan Co (Rob Biller); 19 Jun (1) Paddle Cr pond (JWC); thru Jun and Jul (3-7) Bible Refuge (DW, m.ob.); thru Jun (2+) Limestone, Washington Co (RLK, m.ob.). **Yellow-headed Blackbird**: 3 Jul (1 ad male, at feeder) Vonore, Monroe Co (Dave Langner, Bonnie Langner - photo, fide, Marcia Davis).

Locations: Bible Refuge - unit of Lick Cr Bottoms WMA, Greene Co; Brainerd Levee, Hamilton Co; Paddle Cr pond, Sullivan Co.

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EASTERN MOUNTAIN REGION - - Precipitation was normal for the period, while temperatures were slightly below normal.

A very observable Peregrine Falcon nest in the Smokies gave good viewing to birders this summer. An adult Peregrine Falcon and up to three immatures were seen for several days in June on Unaka Mountain, suggesting a nest site in the vicinity. Sightings of Horned Grebe,

Golden Eagle and Merlin were unusual for summer.

The Lee and Lois Herndon Chapter of TOS conducted two Summer Bird Counts: the 21st count in Carter County on 7 June recorded 116 species and the inaugural count in Unicoi County on 14 June recorded 111 species.

Bobwhite - Eagle: **Northern Bobwhite**: 4 Jul (2) Hampton Cr Cove (Beth Schilling). **Horned Grebe**: 24 Jun (1, breeding plumage) South Holston L, Sullivan Co (JWC, photo), second summer record in NE Tennessee and third in state. **Double-crested Cormorant**: 7 Jun (1) Miller L, Carter Co (Kevin Brooks); 1 Jul (3) Wilbur L, Carter Co (BP, Jean Potter). **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron**: early Jun (2 yg in nest) Watauga R, Carter Co (RLK, m.ob.). **Osprey**: 10 Jul (1) Watauga R, Carter Co (Nicholas Lorch), ers. **Sharp-shinned Hawk**: 15 Jun (1) GSMNP, Cocke Co portion (Kirk Huffstater). **Red-shouldered Hawk**: 14 Jun (1) Unicoi Co (Kim Stroud, et al.); 15-16 Jun (1) Hampton Cr Cove (Richard Gray, Clifton Avery). **Golden Eagle**: 11 Jul (1) Roan Mtn (Holly Taylor, Mark Taylor)

Woodcock - Falcon: **American Woodcock**: 7 Jun (1) Carver's Gap on Roan Mtn (RLK); 5 Jul (1) Schoolyard Springs in Shady Valley (Melinda Fawver). **Black-billed Cuckoo**: 6 Jun (1) Cades Cove, GSMNP (Warren Bielenberg). **Northern Saw-whet Owl**: 2 Jun (1) Gregory Bald trail, GSMNP (Cynthia Washington); 12 Jun (3 nestlings banded) Carver's Gap on Roan Mtn (Richard Lewis); 26 Jun (1) Unaka Mtn (TSM). **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker**: early Jun (nest) Iron Mtn Gap, Unicoi Co (Joe McGuiness); 7 Jun (1) Roan Mtn, at 4450 ft (RLK); 14 Jun (1 each at 3 sites) Unicoi Co (TSM, RRK, Bryan Stevens, et al.). **Merlin**: 18 Jun (1, seen and heard calling) Roan Mtn (RLK), second summer record. **Peregrine Falcon**: 30 May / 2 Jun (1 ad, 3 yg at nest) Alum Cave Bluff, GSMNP (Tiffany Beachy); 14-19 Jun (1 ad, 2-3 im) Unaka Mtn (RRK, Richard Lewis, m.ob.); 15 Jun (1 ad) Greenbrier Pinnacle, GSMNP (Susan Hoyle, Kris Johnson); 22 Jun (1) Elizabethton (Fred Alsop).

Flycatcher - Thrush: **Alder Flycatcher**: thru season (1-4) Roan Mtn (RLK, m.ob.); thru Jun (1-2) Hampton Cr Cove (Rob Biller, RMC, m.ob.). **Willow Flycatcher**: 3 Jun (7) Shady Valley (RLK), max. **Least Flycatcher**: 2 Jun (1) Clingman's Dome, GSMNP (Kevin Bowden), higher elevation than normal; 2 / 18 Jun (1) Roan Mtn, at 6000 ft (RLK), higher elevation than normal; 14 Jun (5) Street's Gap and Iron Mtn Gap, Unicoi Co (TSM, Bryan Stevens, et al.). **Golden-crowned Kinglet**: 17 Jun (6) Unaka Mtn (RLK). **Hermit Thrush**: thru Jun (2-3) Roan Mtn (RLK); 13 Jun / 2 Jul (1 / 2) Cut Laurel Gap, Johnson Co - Ashe Co, NC, line (Merrill Lynch), at 3750 ft in pine-oak forest.

Warbler - Siskin: **Golden-winged Warbler**: 13-14 Jun (1) Street's Gap, Unicoi Co (TSM, BP). **"Brewster's" Warbler**: 19 Jun (1 male) Hampton Cr Cove (John A. Jones). **Swainson's Warbler**: 7 Jun (3) Bald Mtn, Greene Co (Don Miller); 17 Jun (8) Tellico Wilderness, Monroe Co (KAC). **Magnolia Warbler**: thru Jun (2-3) Roan Mtn (RLK); 14-26 Jun (2-4) Unaka Mtn (RRK, TSM, RLK). **Blackburnian Warbler**: 7 Jun (14) Carter Co (m.ob.); 14 Jun (2) Unicoi Co (m.ob.). **Yellow-rumped Warbler**: 2 Jun (4 males, 1 female) Roan Mtn (RLK), with 2+ males seen thru mid Jul (m.ob.). **Vesper Sparrow**: thru season (1-2) Round

Bald on Roan Mtn (RLK, m.ob.). **Savannah Sparrow**: 3 Jun (2) Orchard Bog in Shady Valley (RLK). **Orchard Oriole**: 3 Jun (1) Shady Valley (RLK), scarce there. **Red Crossbill**: 7 Jun thru season (1-3) Roan Mtn (RLK, m.ob.); 13 Jun (1) Street's Gap, Unicoi Co (TSM, BP). **Pine Siskin**: 2 Jun (2) Roan Mtn summit (RLK); 17-25 Jul (2-3) Roan Mtn, at 4450 ft (BP, Jean Potter, m.ob.).

Locations: GSMNP - Great Smoky Mtns National Park; Hampton Cr Cove, Carter Co; Roan Mtn - Carter Co; Shady Valley, Johnson Co; Unaka Mtn, Unicoi Co.

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RH - Rob Harbin
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TSM - Thomas S. McNeil
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RS - Ruben Stoll
CW - Chloe Walker
DW - Darrel Wilder
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INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

The Migrant records observations and studies of birds in Tennessee and adjacent areas.

SUBMISSIONS: The original and two copies of the manuscript should be sent to the Editor: Bob Ford, 808 Hatchie, Brownsville, TN 38012 editorthemigrant@gmail.com. Manuscripts that have been published in other journals should not be submitted.

MATERIAL: The subject matter should relate to some phase of Tennessee ornithology. It should be original, factual, concise and scientifically accurate.

STYLE: Both articles and short notes are solicited; recent issues of *The Migrant* should be used as a guide in the preparation of manuscripts. Where more detail is needed, reference should be made to *Scientific Style and Format*, eighth edition, by the Council of Science Editors, councilscienceeditors.org.

COPY: Manuscripts should be double-spaced with adequate margins for editorial notations and emailed in Word.docx. Tables and figures should be prepared in a separate file with appropriate headings; see *Scientific Style and Format* for examples of appropriate form for tables. Photographs intended for reproduction should be at least 300 dpi or sharp with good contrast on glossy white paper. Weights, measurements, and distances should be in metric units. Dates should be in "continental" form (e.g., 16 March 1997). Use the 24-hour clock (e.g., 0500 or 1900).

NOMENCLATURE: The scientific name of a species should be given after the first use of the full common name in the text. The scientific name should be italicized and in parentheses. Names should follow the *A. O. U. Check-list of North American Birds* (seventh edition, 1998, or supplements).

TITLE: The title should be concise, specific and descriptive.

ABSTRACT: Manuscripts of five or more pages should include an abstract. The abstract should be less then 5% of the length of the manuscript. It should include a brief explanation of why the research was done, the major results, and why the results are important.

LITERATURE CITED: List all literature citations in a "Literature Cited" section at the end of the text. Text citations should include the author and year.

IDENTIFICATION: Manuscripts including reports of rare or unusual species or of species at atypical times should include: date and time, light and weather conditions, exact location, habitat, optical equipment, distance, behavior of bird, comparison with other similar species, characteristic markings, experience of observer, other observers verifying the identification and reference works consulted.

REPRINTS: Reprints are available to authors on request. Billing to authors will be through the TOS treasurer. Request for reprints must be made well in advance of printing.

SEASON REPORTS: Observations that are to be considered for publication in "The Season"section should be mailed to the appropriate Regional Compiler. Consult a recent issue of *The Migrant* for the name and address of the compiler.

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